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For Immediate Release

SRS Blood Drives Save Thousands of Lives

AIKEN, S.C. – January 4, 2011 – Savannah River Site employees have donated enough blood since 1992 to save more than 194,000 lives through life saving transfusions.

In 2010 alone, 6,128 donors provided more than 5,400 units of usable blood.

Shepard Community Blood Center (SCBC) employees are quick to note that for every blood unit donated, three local lives are saved. “This is because we can separate out various blood components contained within each unit and assist different patients with different life threatening needs,” said Pam Rascon, Director, Community Resources, SCBC. “SRS’s blood donations have been given at unprecedented levels. We are amazed and at the same time thrilled with all the life-giving support they continue to offer the communities surrounding SRS.”

According to SRS Blood Drive Coordinator David Smith, these statistics are all the more impressive given that the size of the SRS worker population has declined. “Unexpectedly, our level of donations has dramatically increased over recent years even though the size of our workforce has steadily dropped. In fact, donations have more than tripled,” said Smith. “That speaks volumes about the character of the SRS workforce and their desire to help those in need.”

SCBC bloodmobiles visit 16 separate blood collection areas across the 310-square mile Savannah River Site. Typically, employees are permitted to donate up to six times a year.

“Shepard is blessed to have such a strong and supportive partnership with SRS. Over the years, their employees have graciously rolled up their sleeves to help save local lives,” said Kevin Belanger, President & CEO, Shepard Community Blood Center. “The volunteer blood donors at SRS are providing an incredible gift to local patients that will never know their names, but will always be thankful that blood was available to them during their hour of need.”

Nationally, only 37 percent of the American population is eligible to donate blood. Of those eligible, only 10 percent donate.

In many ways, SRS workers represent a typical cross-section of America's citizens. However, Smith said SRS employees do not donate in line with all of the national statistics. "Of the 37 percent of those SRS employees eligible to donate, an astounding number, nearly 35 percent are blood donors," said Smith. "That's simply unheard of."

The 2010 October campaign set a new record for blood units donated in a single month at 1,025. "As of late, we've been averaging about 1,000 units of blood per drive at SRS," said Smith.

SRNS-11-1